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UNCLAS MANAMA 001695

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/PPD; NEA/PI CBOURGEOIS, NEA/ARP
ECA/A DAS TFARRELL, ECA/A/AEN SEDLINS AND MASTRANGELO,
ECA/A/E/USS PETER BENDA
ABU DHABI PLEASE PASS MEPI

E.O. 12958

TAGS: [PREL](#) [OIIP](#) [OEXC](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [BA](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY MANAMA'S RAMADAN ACTIVITIES SHOWCASE
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

REF: STATE 219905

[¶1.](#) Embassy Manama's 2004 Ramadan activities follow:

-- The Ambassador hosted a lively youth-oriented U.S. Elections Night "majlis" in his Residence on November 2. More than one hundred University of Bahrain students, NGO representatives, journalists, and government officials attended. Eleven Mass Communications undergraduates who interned last summer in Chicago media outlets assisted the PAO with a mock balloting program that was a big hit with the guests. (The internships in Chicago were supported by the FY 04 DePaul/University of Bahrain MEPI University Linkage.) Post's participants in MEPI's Study of the U.S. Program for Undergraduate Student Leaders attended the event and gave Emboffs a readout on their experiences in the U.S. last summer. Our featured majlis speaker was U.S. Fulbright Scholar Dr. Scott Waalkes, who explained how his native Ohio was critical in determining the outcome of the election, and responded to inquiries from students.

-- The DCM hosted a ladies-only Ghabqa (late dinner) on October 24 in her Residence for Bahrain's female movers and shakers (and Shaikhas) who work in education, the media, business, NGOs, and the government. The guests represented all segments of Bahraini society, from members of the royal family and Western-educated secularists to veiled public school teachers. A large delegation from the Bahrain Businesswomen's Society arrived en masse, providing the DCM and Emboffs a perfect opportunity to engage at length on the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement in an informal Ramadan setting. Guests discussed recent proposals by some ultra-conservative Members of Parliament to transform the University of Bahrain, the only co-ed public university in the Gulf, into segregated male/female campuses. Perceived as a real set-back to women in Bahrain, this proposal was loudly and openly opposed by all of the guests.

[¶12.](#) The Ambassador and Emboffs have also attended nightly majlises and iftars hosted by Bahraini government officials, Members of Parliament, religious figures, academics, journalists, and businessmen. Mrs. Monroe attended two ladies-only majlises hosted by the wife of the King and the Prime Minister's wife. The DCM has attended iftars hosted by business and finance leaders. Post's four Fulbright grantees have been invited to Ramadan events hosted by their University of Bahrain colleagues.

[¶13.](#) The Public Affairs Section is distributing Eid greetings with Americana-style 2005 calendars to a wide cross section of Bahraini contacts.

[¶14.](#) The Embassy's Community Liaison Office organized a Ramadan tent evening on November 3 for American and FSN staff of all faiths to gather informally and demonstrate their respect for Islam.

MONROE